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COMMUNITY TELEVISION REVIEW

A Publication of the  
Alliance for Community Media  
Volume 16, No. 5 • \$4





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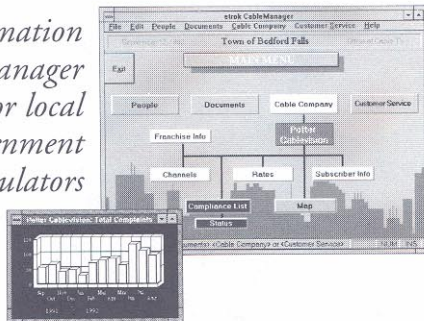
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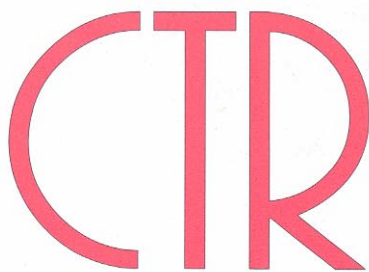
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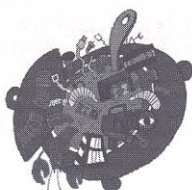
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# Special Interest Groups

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are organized by members sharing a common interest and desire to establish a network to communicate within and outside the Alliance.

## Educational Access

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# Accessing the Alliance

**Jobline.** For access jobs across America, call 202/393-2653.

**Bulletin Board.** To connect, call 217/359-9118, and set your computer's modem to 300, 1200 or 2400 baud, 8 bits, 1 stop bit, no parity.

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**Address Changes.** Please contact the national office at the address above for membership or CTR subscription address changes.

**Community Television Review.** Advertising and editorial, call 616/454-6663, fax 616/454-6698, or write CTR, 15 Ionia SW, Suite 201, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4113.



## CTR to Change Name

In line with the organization's name change last year, *Community Television Review* will become *Community Media Review* the first of the year.

The change was approved at the 1993 Convention in Atlanta. For a chance to give us your views on CTR, take a few moments to respond to the Reader Survey on page 23.

## Interview, Documentary Series on Bigotry

Two taped series by Beverly Hills, CA access producer Adaire Harris are being offered free on loan to access stations.

*The Frank Eiklor Report* is a series of half-hour informative interviews with location footage. Eiklor is president of Shalom International, a Christian organization that works against racism, antisemitism and related bigotry. *Voices of Today* is a diverse series of documentaries and interviews with a variety of hosts including Rabbi David Baron of Temple Shalom for the Arts.

Both programs have won a number of awards from both the Far West Region's WAVE competition and the Southern California Motion Picture Council.

For further information or a list of programs, contact Adaire Harris TV Productions, 525 Leslie Lane, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Telephone 310/271-2713.

## Up & Coming

**December 1** Deadline for entries. Environmental Video Contest. Contact WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134 for details.

**December 1** Deadline for entries. 24th National Educational Film & Video Festival. Eligible productions include documentaries, live action shorts, dramatic features and shorts, animation, classroom programs, medical/health programs, training/instructional tapes, special interest videos, made-for TV programs, PSAs, film and video art, student-made documentaries and narratives. For more information, contact National Educational Film & Video Festival, 655 Thirteenth St.,

Oakland, CA 94612. Telephone 510/465-6885.

**December 2-6** Union for Democratic Communications Conference, *Media, Culture and Popular Hegemony: A Pan American Dialogue*, Havana, Cuba. Contact Jackie Byars at 313/534-4185 or Bill Barlow at 703/519-7894.

**December 15** Deadline for entries. *Artists' Television Access • Family, Inc.* – investigations, explorations, and personal expressions of the world's oldest institution needed for film and video exhibition. Work by youth encouraged, as well as experimental documentaries, media deconstructions and the like. For submission information, contact Family, Inc. c/o Artists' Television Access, 992 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110. Telephone 415/824-3890.

**January 21, 1994** Deadline for entries. 6th Annual United States Super 8 Film/Video Festival. Any

genre encouraged – animation, documentary, experimental, fiction, personal, etc. – but work must originate on Super 8mm film or 8mm video. For more information, contact United States Super 8 Film/Video Festival, Rutgers Film Co-op, Program in Cinema Studies/Rutgers University, 43 Mine St., New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903.

**January 27-30, 1994** Alliance for Community Media National Board Meeting, site to be announced. Contact the national office at 202/393-2650.

**May 12-15, 1994** Alliance for Community Media National Board Meeting, Washington, DC. Contact the national office at 202/393-2650.

**April 1, 1994** Deadline for entries. EarthPeace International Film Festival. Documentaries, animation, short or feature length film or video addressing the categories of the Environment, War

and Peace, and Justice and Human Rights. For details and entry forms, contact EarthPeace International Film Festival, Vermont World Peace Film Foundation, PO Box 531, Burlington, VT 05402-0531. Telephone 802/660-2600. Fax 802/658-3311.

*CTR encourages submission of upcoming events for this forum. Submissions should be of general interest to all Alliance members and include title, organization, dates, location and contact numbers. Please try to notify CTR at least three months prior to the event. Send submissions to CTR, 15 Ionia SW, Suite 201, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4113, or call 616/454-6663 voice, 616/454-6698 fax.*

## Quote to Note

"Half our revenues will come from products that haven't even been invented yet."

– Tele-Communications Inc. president and CEO John Malone in a joint press conference announcing the proposed merger between TCI and Bell Atlantic Corp., arguably one of the largest corporate mergers in the history of capitalism.

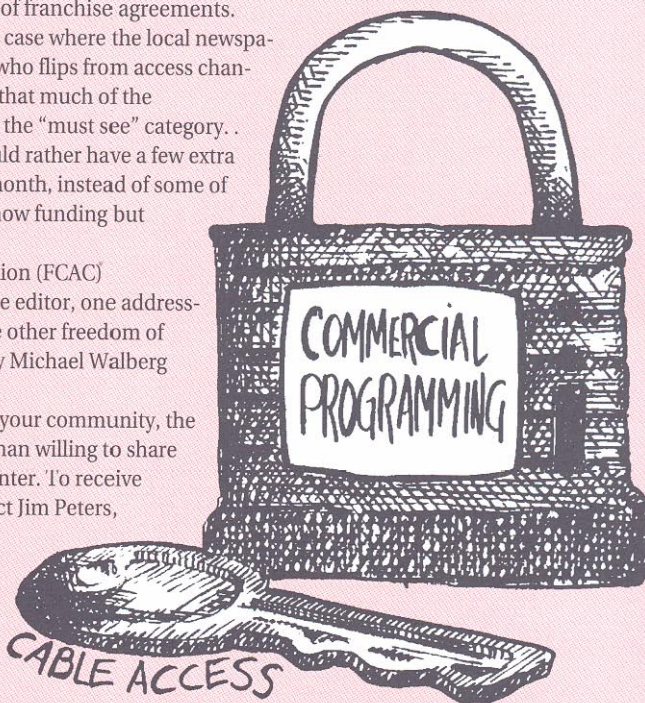
## Fighting Back in Fairfax

Among the provisions of the 1992 Cable Act was one permitting cable companies to itemize on subscriber's bills the amount of franchise fees the cable company sends to local governing units. In some instances, it has prompted editorials in local newspapers decrying the fees, especially those used to fund access provisions of franchise agreements.

Fairfax, Virginia was one such case where the local newspaper concluded that "... anyone who flips from access channel to access channel discovers that much of the programming hardly belongs in the "must see" category. Cable subscribers probably would rather have a few extra quarters in their pockets each month, instead of some of the frilly programming they're now funding but probably aren't watching."

Fairfax Cable Access Corporation (FCAC) responded with two letters to the editor, one addressing the cost of public access, the other freedom of speech, as well as the cartoon by Michael Walberg pictured at the right.

If this has become an issue in your community, the folks at Fairfax would be more than willing to share their replies with your access center. To receive copies of their responses, contact Jim Peters, Manager of Promotions and Publicity, Fairfax Cable Access Corp., 2929 Eskridge Rd., Suite S, Fairfax, VA 22031. Telephone 703/573-1090. Fax 703/573-1210.





# If you haven't joined the Alliance for Community Media, here's how to become a member.

## MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

(Please check all that apply)

Yes, I want to join the Alliance for Community Media. I am a(n):

- ☒ Access Staff Member ☐ Access Board Member  
☐ Community Producer ☐ Cable Regulatory Staff or Board Member  
☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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☐ At-Large (includes professional or volunteer individuals who are not associated with a member organization)  
☐ Advocate (volunteer) \$30 ☐ Professional (salaried) \$75  
☐ Patron \$120 ☐ Life \$1,000

All individual memberships expire one year from the last day of the month in which you join.

### SPECIAL CONTRIBUTION

I am including an additional amount to further support the activities of the Alliance and help broaden participation in the organization.

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☐ Local origination ☐ Leased access ☐ Other

### DEMOGRAPHICS (individual members only)

This optional information will help us to better serve current and potential members.

- ☐ Black ☐ White ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander  
☐ Native American ☐ Other ☐ Female ☐ Male

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## What is 'Community'?

### To the Editor:

Victor Sanchez's (Director of Outreach for the Manhattan Neighborhood Network) recent contribution to your publication [Vol. 16, No. 3] brings up some interesting questions about community involvement in public access. As a producer on the public access channels in Manhattan, a provider of production facilities and as an advocate for public access, I see some inherent problems in the approach Mr. Sanchez takes in his article.

The first question anyone involved in public access should tackle and ask is what one believes access should be. If the answer you come up with is that PA is a place where the community has the chance to utilize the medium of television in whatever way the community chooses, then you have to immediately ask yourself the next question: "What is 'community'?" This is a question that has confounded even the most well-meaning of public servants so it is not surprising that Mr. Sanchez, MNN and its board of directors have stumbled mightily in this matter.

Many people fall into the noble trap of assuming that a community is represented by its not-for-profit social services organizations. Year after year, public access in Manhattan has been berated by some of its most staunch advocates for not "representing" the community. And year after year we given the same examples of "noble" community groups (senior citizens, women's groups, etc.) who should be on public access *instead* of the "notorious" "weirdos", as Mr. Sanchez

puts it. Such organizations provide wonderful benefits to the neighborhood they operate in and they should have the chance to show their services on television. But are these organizations the only word in representing a community?

Just who can define a community? Mr. Sanchez? MNN? The readers of this publication? Me? Nobody can define a community outside of the most superficial qualifications. You can try to address the Hispanic community of Manhattan but then find, as Mr. Sanchez notes, that it is made up of more than one group and that within the sub-groups are further divisions. Is a group of people interested in a single subject, say theater, considered a community? How about people interested in seeing avant-garde video? How about people interested in seeing ice melt? If you say "no", you *are not* talking about public access anymore. If you cannot accept the concept that a community can consist of even just one individual then you do not belong around the administration of public access. If public access is anything, it is where individuals as well as groups can express themselves without having to conform to some programmer's whim of what is acceptable television viewing. An access organization that cannot accept or respect the differences between the individual and the "community" and let both exist together in cooperation should close its doors and the executives should find employment where discrimination is acceptable.

**Noboru Takahashi**  
New York, NY

*Editor's note: The above letter was excerpted due to space considerations.*

Community Television Review welcomes reader comment on articles appearing in its pages. Letters should be limited to no more than 300 words. CTR reserves the right to edit letters in consideration of space requirements. Letters must be signed and include your address and telephone number. Address to: Editor, Community Television Review, 15 Ionia SW, Ste. 201, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4113.



## FROM THE CHAIR

### There are Poems amongst the Chaos. . .

By Anthony Riddle

**I** direct MTN, the access center in Minneapolis. Among the many things we do for the community is our coverage of the Hennepin County Commissioner Meetings. For five years we have had a contractual arrangement. We did what they could not. Now they want to purchase the equipment to shoot themselves. We want to hold on: prestige, usefulness, money. Sense of loss after five years. Freelancers. But if they can do it, why waste the resource? Other groups cannot produce themselves. Go to them and establish similar relationships. Teach and release.

Bottomline: Means of production gradually become more accessible. What remains consistent is a need for mass distribution. A collective address for receivers to tune into. We must move to be in position.

*Film in the Cities* closed shop recently in the Twin Cities after twenty successful years of serving media artists. There may be many contributing reasons, but a major one seems to be commitment to specific equipment. Film is an incomparable medium which, hopefully, will never go away. But it was once the *only* medium for moving pictures. Now, those who produce in film do so because they choose. The others, they moved on to video because it was cheaper, easier and sufficient to their needs.

Maybe we should just salute the words of Gen. Douglas MacArthur, "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away. . ."

We might be suggesting the wrong thing when we look to expand our thinking about program distribution, when we speculate new systems. The Internet, for instance, might be closed down by commercial interests before we organize it to serve the access communities. I look at MTN and the challenges before us and pray we are making the right choices.

This is why it is important to have many different models in the Alliance. We can't have all our organizational eggs in one evolutionary basket. Strive for what you believe is right, but encourage others to do so, too. Let that light shine brightly, let your work speak. Don't attack each other. Recognize the love and passion we all have for the work we do. Connect with others and share with them what works and doesn't work about what you're doing.

Change is massive all around us, that none can argue. That change requires the uncertainty of chaos, you may be certain. But take heart, people: Chaos attends the birth of a new order which we struggle yet to understand. The poetry in the chaos is in knowing that we strive as one, *when viewed from afar*, to bring people together and that to do so is good.

Keep your head to the sky.

*Anthony Riddle chairs the Alliance for Community Media. He is executive director of the Minneapolis Television Network, 125 SE Main St., Minneapolis, MN 55414. Telephone 612/331-8576. Fax 612/331-8578. e-mail <mtn@MR.NET>.*

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### A Taste of Access Gumbo

By T. Andrew Lewis

**T**his issue of your CTR, rather than a specific theme, explores many, disparate issues that blend together to make up the present environment of access. It is like an access gumbo. And so appropriate is the menu, for like Louisiana gumbo, today's telecommunications plate is loaded with ingredients.

I recall my first taste of this unique dish. It was exciting! But, what was with all that stuff? Some of the ingredients pleased my palate. Others were intriguing; a few a bit overpowering while some were downright nasty. And so it is with the current soup in which access floats.

Just the sheer quantity of ingredients of a gumbo makes it a tasty delicacy. Similarly, the vast number of technological toys touted by the industry giants makes the promised communications future a tempting treat. But we must examine the dish carefully.

There is the telco entry ingredient. Like the homemade sausage in a gumbo, this is a mandatory but unpredictable com-

ponent. If properly prepared, it can provide an additional source of flavorful information for all. Or, conversely, it can be a pork barrel for the baby bells. Clearly distasteful is the mixture of telco and cable company – a new ingredient created through merger mania. Reminiscent of the chicken feet in a traditional gumbo, this is a nasty ingredient that not only results in an unpalatable monopoly, but is also hard to swallow since it poisons diversity.

And then there is the basic framework that will determine the primary, overall flavor of the dish. In gumbo, this is usually okra or file' and crab. In our future communications world, it is the NII or National Information Infrastructure. The recipe is now being written for this framework in the White House and on Capitol Hill. We intend to be in the kitchen with our spoon in the pot.

Now, please whet your appetite on the broad based, access menu that's been placed on the table here.

*T. Andrew Lewis is the executive director of the Alliance, 666 11th St. NW, Suite 806, Washington, DC 20001-4542. Telephone 202/393-2650.*



## PUBLIC POLICY

By Alan Bushong

**A**lliance joins NAMAC, AIVF and PBS Minority and Independent Producers in Public Policy Project. In July, the Alliance Board approved the concept of participating with a Media Arts and Community Media consortium of organizations in a project to coordinate public policy efforts made in the public interest. The groups include the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), the National Association of Media Arts & Culture (NAMAC), the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers (NCIPBP), and the PBS Minority Consortia (PBSMC). Each has successful experience in public policy work and in securing funds.

Consortium members share the goal of shaping a telecommunications structure which provides affordable access and free expression. Members have identified the following areas for the primary focus: the regulation of new technologies and the emerging fiber optic network; maintaining funding and attaining free expression for independent and minority producers on PBS; areas of concern resulting from the Cable Act of 1992; and reauthorization for the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities while maintaining free expression.

The project proposes assistance for member organizations to coordinate existing information resources, inform members and educate members, educate the public and increase impact on policy. The project focuses on our common interests, and may

assist us in working through snags resulting from differing needs. Media independents and artists often need massive use of facilities while access centers need to maintain availability of limited resources to all segments of the community. We each serve a vital role in strengthening our democracy by providing a public sphere for the concerns and ideas of private citizens.

**The Gigantic Get Bigger.** As you are probably aware, Bell Atlantic is swallowing TCI, the largest cable corporation, in a merger announced October 12. The bulge barely shows in Bell's gigantic digestive system. Although centralization of telecommunications has been taking place for a long time, this merger is the largest. Other mergers may take place prior to publication of this issue. The reaction of President Clinton's Justice Department regarding anti-trust and the resulting level of regulation on Bell will be of great interest.

**Non-profit Organizations Using Community Media.** The Alliance represents the interests of local programmers nationwide. A substantial number of national organizations will need to join the Alliance in promoting legislation that preserves public space as telephone companies and cable companies merge, and as the term competition slowly, or perhaps rapidly, fades into the sunset.

Each access center is encouraged to maintain a list of major organizations using community media. Categories include: gov-

continued on page 22

## INTERNATIONAL

By Nantz Rickard

**T**he other day I was sitting in the office and, out of the corner of my eye, I barely caught a dark blur darting across the floor. After a couple of passes I could see that it was a small mouse. Oddly enough, (and don't take this wrong) it made me think of the international activities of Alliance members – fast, dark shadows darting about the edge of peripheral vision. With so many people doing so much, it is hard for any of us to be fully aware of other's activities.

So it seems like a good time to develop the means by which everybody can connect with each other. And, at least to start with, define who "everybody" is. Do you think of yourself as part of the International activities you hear about in the Alliance? Or are those activities something that a few people somewhere else did?

Through evolving communications systems, our perception of the world has changed. It used to be that "statewide" was considered a large area; only big companies could say "serving the entire great state of Maine." After that, "national" became an acceptable area in which people interacted and commersed. Now "international" has become the newly accessible community.

Distance has become a minor factor in some ways – we are only an e-mail or a voice away from one another. Even in this "smaller" world though, it still takes 27 hours to get from D.C. to Australia. The world is huge. And it has lots of people in it. And more and more of them are tapping the power of communica-

tions tools. So there are many people we would like to get to know, and many places to discover and learn about. This is clearly not an undertaking for just a few people.

Ultimately, the international work of the Alliance is the combined efforts of each person who has any contact or experience beyond our borders. You needn't consider that you must be part of a committee, or that you can't meet some required time commitment. Each person's contribution is valuable and is the real base of activity of the Alliance. The regional and national levels of the International Committee of the Alliance are simply a means by which everybody is connected together, so that people can benefit from each other's work. More and more, the work of International must become *your* experiences and relationships with people around the world, supported by the Alliance regions.

In trying to connect with each other, and with so much ground to cover, every individual's contribution is extremely important. No matter how broad your experience, or how informal – a conversation you had, an exchange of letters or programs, or experiences from your travels – call your Regional International Chair. Nobody else is doing what you're doing. And if you tie in with other folks through the regions, the impact of your effort is greatly multiplied, as others will benefit as well.

*Nantz Rickard chairs the Alliance's International Committee. She is Deputy Director of DCTV, 1400 20th Street, NW, Suite G-2. Washington, DC 20036. Telephone 202/659-6260, fax 212/296-8334.*



## Cutting-Edge Programs on Deep Dish

**T**wo live cutting-edge programs are available this fall through the Deep Dish Television Network.

*In a word, with technology* is a four-part interactive series exploring the transformation of the independent voice through the integration of art and electronic technologies. Produced at iEAR Studios (Integrated Electronic Arts at Rensselaer) in Troy, New York. The live series expands the public forum on the latest ideas in art and politics, language and technology to areas outside the hotbeds of contemporary national art and political scenes.

The participating artists of *in a word, with technology* represent a multiplicity of cultures and a diversity of aesthetic and political concerns. The artists and the national audience will interact in each program through two-way live telephone conversation as well as two-way interactive video over telephone lines (picture-tel).

This fall's programs include multimedia artist Tony Oursler, with poet/performance artist Constance DeJong, on October 27, followed by experimental musician/performance artist Robert Ashley on November 17. Shows coming next spring will feature performance

artist/writer Guillermo Gomez-Pena, and experimental musician Pauline Oliveros, with writer Ione.

All four programs will be transmitted via satellite on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 - 8:30 pm (EST) on G-STAR 1, transponder 3 horizontal (color bars and tone from 6:30 - 7:00 pm). For more information on *in a word, with technology*, contact Professor Branda Miller, iEAR Studios, Darrin Communications Center, RPI, Troy, NY 12180-3590, or call 518/276-4783.

Later this fall, Creative Time presents *We Interrupt This Program. . .*, a live special in observance of the AIDS crisis on December 1, World AIDS Day.

Artists, activists and community programmers join forces to intervene in television business-as-usual, remembering those lost to AIDS and those still fighting to survive. This year's special features a "real people" work by Ann Carlson, contributions by lesbian and gay youth, and work by guest artists from around the country.

For more information and satellite coordinates, contact Mary Ellen Strom or Bobbi Tsumagari at Creative Time, 131 West 24th St., New York, NY 10011. Or call 212/206-6674.

## Deep Dish – More than a Catchy Slogan

**I**n 1985, a group of camcorder activists coined the phrase "Don't Just Watch TV, Make It!" More than a catchy slogan, this concept became the focal point for what soon became Deep Dish TV, the first national grassroots satellite network. Deep Dish TV is based on the work and support and collaboration of public access television producers and stations across the United States. Presenting over 150 programs on housing, women's issues, the environment, censorship, labor and militarism, Deep Dish TV provides one of the few consistent alternatives to the homogenous perspective of mainstream media.

Deep Dish TV's Spring 1994 series will provide a timely look at our nation's health care crisis and is designed to educate and activate communities to work for a comprehensive and just health care system. Crisis in Health Care: A Grassroots Response aims to broaden the discussion to include the voices of people at the grassroots level: the health care providers, low-income families, immigrants, women and people of color.

Like many quickly growing non-profit orga-

nizations, Deep Dish TV is in the midst of reorganizing our operation for leaner and meaner times. Now is the time when we need your support: the public access TV workers who have helped to build the Network and use our programs.

Deep Dish TV is planning to launch a membership drive for access centers during early 1994, but in the meantime, you can help us by:

- sending a cash contribution,
- organizing a fundraising benefit and screening in your community,
- sponsoring a DDTV "boutique" of fabulous and trendy merchandise,
- and serving as a regional location for the compilation of our spring and fall series.

If you'd like to know more about how you can help or get more information about "Crisis in Health Care," call Executive Director Kai Lumumba-Barrow or Program Director Cynthia Lopez at 212/473-8933, or write Deep Dish, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012.

– Lauren-Glenn Davitian,  
Deep Dish TV Board Chair

## An Access Gumbo

**R**eaders are used to seeing particular themes explored in CTR, but this time we depart from our usual mien to bring together articles and ideas collected over the past few months but for one reason or another haven't yet made it between the folds of CTR, a sort of access gumbo, a goulash, or potpourri.

Some philosophy, a challenging opinion or two, practical advice, community video across southern borders, reports on various and sundry things, as well as a chance for readers to talk back to CTR all combine to make this issue a stew of Alliance member's diverse interests.

In this issue, Bob Devine interviews Deb Luppold of Portland Cable Access about her unique and creative management style in "creating a user-friendly work environment". Paul Whiting takes us to Mexico and Costa Rica to share his story of community video south of our border. Greg Boozell challenges us in our thinking about community media. Stuart Heady, chair of the Austin (Texas) Cable Commission, reflects on 20 years of community television in Austin. Dirk Koning suggests it's time for access centers to declare to the IRS a desire to lobby. Archivist Bonnie Wilson asks us to save those videotapes and tells us how. Jon Koeze reports on the 1993 NATOA conference. And there's the usual complement of sidebars with short bytes of news we hope you can use.

We direct your attention especially to the reader survey on page 23. It's a chance to share your thoughts and suggestions on the direction of CTR. Your response will be invaluable as the Editorial Board charts the course of future issues of CTR in its evolution to *Community Media Review*.

All in all, a typical atypical issue. We hope you learn something new, become more informed, and maybe even get inspired. Read on.

– Tim Goodwin and Dirk Koning



## Creating a "User-Friendly" Work Environment

Deborah Luppold has been Executive Director of Portland Cable Access for ten years. Her background in training and production, her unique management style and the clarity of her vision of access have contributed to the success of community access in Portland. CTR Editorial Board member Bob Devine recently had the opportunity to discuss issues of staffing and organizational climate with Deb.

**CTR:** I've always heard a lot of positive things about Portland Community Access and in visiting at the national conference a few years back and talking with folks from your center, I was impressed by the vision and commitment of staff. I'd like to talk with you about building the "user friendly" climate for access workers and activities and a general climate for the access center. One area that I have questions about has to do with the fact that access staff tend to do the same tasks over and over again. How do you keep that fresh and new for them?

**DEBORAH LUPPOLD:** My sense is that the client base achieves that. My feeling is that the staff is doing repetitive tasks, but they're doing it for different people. Part of our hiring process is to hire people who have an interest and love for people and how people are different. I've always felt that we can train anyone in how to do television, but we can't train people in how to get along with people. If in the hiring process we really focus on the issues of diversity and acceptance and make it very clear that the role of the staff person is to facilitate the use of the facilities by members of the community and community based organizations that are coming in, that there's not the opportunity for frustration or confusion, because the staff person knows that they're not being hired — even if they're a television professional — to make TV. They're being hired to facilitate the use of these facilities and to train people to use these facilities. So my sense is that it's really our client base that keeps it fresh.

Everyone who works here says really clearly that every day is a challenge and that every day here is new and different. The spectrum of people that come in through our front door every day is incredible. We have incredibly hostile and crazy people, and we have incredibly kind, friendly loving people. It's really a matter of finding out what that person needs to facilitate them. The different kinds of fine tuning that happens which makes it an enjoyable process is (1) to really work to make sure that the staff person is adequately trained so that their competencies are the very best that they can possibly be, and (2) to empower the staff person at multiple layers. For example, our entry-level access technicians are able to take a complaint call and process it. So if someone calls up and is complaining about a program in




which a guy took his clothes off, we really work to avoid having that complaint call end up with me or our programming coordinator. Everyone here has got to speak to a complainant, they have to understand that we're a First Amendment forum. They have the authority to process the complaint.

### *From start to finish?*

From start to finish. That's part of their job responsibility. So I think that there's a sense of empowerment. The other thing that we do is what I would describe as our "Captain's Log," and it's a log at the front desk where information is disseminated. It's also where we track what is going on. So everyone reads the log, and it's where people talk about what complaint calls were received, what complimentary calls were received, what seems to be working, what is not working, what happened as an issue during the night shift that needs to be addressed. Everyone knows that everyone else reads the log. If, for example, someone is processing a complaint and the complaint ends up in my lap, I put a copy of my correspondence into the log so that everyone knows how it was resolved. I think that people frequently can feel left out of the loop when they get big enough that they don't feel as though they have information and that they are really powerless. Certainly there are limits, but those are a couple of the ways that we do that.

I feel strongly that we are paid to facilitate use of these facilities for members of our community and community-based organizations. We have a very rigid philosophy that when you come to the front

  
**I feel strongly that we are paid to facilitate use of these facilities for members of our community and community-based organizations. We have a very rigid philosophy that when you come to the front door you are wearing one of two hats. One hat is the hat of a staff person, and you are here to facilitate the use of the facilities for other people. The other hat is that you are here as a user and/or a volunteer. When you come in as a user/volunteer, it's critical that you abide by the rules as all other users and volunteers do, and that you not use your key, you not go into restricted areas, etc.. We have to function within our own rules if we want to use our own facilities.**



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*Absolutely. You raise about ten issues that I want to follow up on. One of them is that you say that you recruit and screen for people who really have an appreciation for diversity and a love of people. How do you do that? How do you go about soliciting applicants? How do you screen, how do you test how do you measure that in an interview or whatever process you use for hiring?*

I have developed a fairly complex process...We advertise as broadly as we can afford to and then I have one of my administrative people who does not participate in the interview process facilitate all the applications. The applications come in and they're handled so that all the affirmative action information and any identifiers are deleted from the application. I then form a committee that consists of the direct supervisor, someone who is already in that position and myself. The three of us sit down and develop the criteria by which the applications will be evaluated. We're each given a set of applications and we rate them numerically. Those rating sheets go back to the administrative person who does all the calculations and then comes up with a list of ten candidates for interview. If the interview list does not have a balance of gender or ethnic representation, she or he finds the first most highly qualified people that round out the interview pool.

We also use the same list of questions for each candidate so that we're not testing in different ways. We do fairly thorough reference checks. Our list of questions and how people respond to them is, I think, a very important indicator. We use questions that will range from, "Tell us about yourself," to, "What would you do if you came in to work on Monday, you were the only one here, the phone was ringing off the hook, and you had five irate callers wanting to know why you put a live program out on Saturday night that permitted a fifty-five year old man to pull his pants down and wiggle his penis at the camera?"

*You really ask that question?*

You bet I do. You can get a really good read from the response. Sometimes I will vary that question — that's the one question on our list that we do vary — depending on the applicant. It's sort of like, "What might push this person's buttons?" After we're done with all of the interviews, I ask each of the people who have participated in the process to make a list of the five people they would hire in the order they would hire them, and this becomes the basis for our discussion. And historically the top five candidates

are inevitably the same, and it's just the order that they end up being placed in...

*So that staff have a real say in the process of bringing someone on board.*

Very much. Now one of the caveats that we have is that when push comes to shove, I have final say. That has never occurred, but it's just a kind of a given.

*You said that you wanted to make sure that staff are adequately trained for the kind of work that they do. What do you do about training, in-service training, professional development, so that staff feel like they're growing.*

I don't feel as though we're able to do enough, because we can't do enough. Generally what we try to do is to assign them to another person in the same role, to work side-by-side with that person. So we try to bring them on before they're needed to cover shifts. They basically have to go through all of our classes, and follow another staff person around, day-in and day-out, and then competencies are evaluated. We go through and we determine the primary things that they need to be trained on and what critical issues are. For example, portapak check-in and portapak check-out; what goes into that, how many are happening per day, what kind of things do you need to be alert to, what kind of things do you need to watch over? When they first start carrying out such functions by themselves, they're supervised. We monitor the transaction paperwork very closely.

*Do they get feedback on that?*

Oh yes! They are not left to cover a function prior to being ready to. For example, I have a woman on staff now who's fifty-five, and when she was hired she said, "I'm technically terrified." She's now teaching studio classes. She's now able to facilitate an evening shift where we have two live productions going out simultaneously. She just started doing that three months ago; she's been on board for eighteen months. My feeling is that we have enough people coming into the facility that if I had a bunch of — if you'll pardon this — white, jock-ey men, I wouldn't have that kind of issue, but I want for the face of the staff to have the same diversity as our clientele.

*That's a great success story. One of the things that I'm interested in is the shift transitions, and the "Captain's Log" is a real intriguing idea. For me it has to do with participation — how people participate in the directions and decision-making of the facility — and it also has to do with continuity and people's sense of the value and the good of the whole organization. I'm wondering how you came by the "Captain's Log" to begin with, and how you go about building that.*

We actually have now what I would describe as three logs. One basically has procedural memos in it so that if memos are issued they go into the adminis-



**...at the point I give them their key and a pass to the alarm system, this is the discussion that we have. I essentially say that in my opinion I feel that it is a privilege to get to do what I love to do every day, and that to me having this key and this pass is a privilege. It's a privilege that brings with it, in the eyes of our client base, power. If you feel power within your personal life, it is very easy to abuse your power in this space, and that is a thing that we will not tolerate here. We will not tolerate jokes that infer that you're going to withhold service until someone does something in exchange. That power is nothing to joke with, because to many people it is real. I feel that very very strongly. To me, that's part of our culture.**

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trative log, and that's at the front desk. We have another log book which is technical changes in the facility, so that it's instructions on how certain things work, and if changes have been made, they go into that notebook as well. I would say it emerged from staff meetings where we would be talking about different things and someone would mention something and people would just quickly forget it. We decided that rather than having to write a memo and copy it to eighteen people or so, that it was better to have one centrally located log which we could all read. Everyone reads the log, and you can assume that you have sent a memo to someone if you put it in the log. So part of it was environmental — we wanted to limit how much paper we were generating here — and we wanted to be able to document activities so that someone could point to a reference of where this was documented, this how it happened.

*As a parallel to that, do staff really have a sense of ownership? Do they participate in decision-making?*

I think in this organization they participate in decision-making far more so than in most organizations. I kind of run our staff meetings as though they're a Friend's meeting, so that if people have something to say, they say it. At the beginning of this year people said that they wanted certain types of training. So we've done full-group diversity training. We did a staff retreat where we had a trainer come in and talk to us about dealing with difficult people and team building. We've done our first aid training, and we're doing activities together, so that we're a group and we're all in the learning mode. We have gone through and done a revision of our personnel policies where the staff brought recommended changes to the Board. I then put together a committee of staff people to review drug and alcohol policies from other similarly-sized organizations, and had the staff committee draft a drug and alcohol policy, bring it to the staff, get the staff to sign off on it, and then I brought it to the Board. . . The premise was that if we're going to have this policy, rather than just adopting someone else's, let's make it mirror our organization.

*And then staff owns it in effect. I have one more area that I want to take up with you. When you have a staff that is diverse, how do you build a team? How do you build esprit de corps? Diversity is often a difficult management problem.*

One of the things that I have made real clear here is that the quality of life for each employee is very critical, but the needs of the organization come first. This is the mission of the organization. This is what we are mandated to accomplish, and this is what we need to do to accomplish it. If we are able to get our personal needs met within the confines of doing that, then this is the right job for you. If your personal needs cannot be met, then you need to be seeking employment elsewhere. That's the bottom line here for us.

*Is that part of your orientation of a staff person coming in?*

Yes.

*That's good, because it doesn't help much to hear that later on.*

No it doesn't. And what I do is I basically sit down with everybody that we hire, and at the point I give them their key and a pass to the alarm system, this is the discussion that we have. I essentially say

**We have Christian Jews, we have Rastafarians who are anarchists, and I know that this is true for every access center. I think that the way that we build a climate of tolerance is to have very clear operating guidelines and rules, and when those rules are encroached upon, if it's not a flagrant violation, to give the user the benefit of the doubt as many times as possible without it being an insult to the corporation.**

that in my opinion I feel that it is a privilege to get to do what I love to do every day, and that to me having this key and this pass is a privilege. It's a privilege that brings with it, in the eyes of our client base, power. If you feel power within your personal life, it is very easy to abuse your power in this space, and that is a thing that we will not tolerate here. We will not tolerate jokes that infer that you're going to withhold service until someone does something in exchange. That power is nothing to joke with, because to many people it is real. I feel that very very strongly. To me, that's part of our culture.

We have had interesting incidents here. We have Christian Jews, we have Rastafarians who are anarchists, and I know that this is true for every access center. I think that the way that we build a climate of tolerance is to have very clear operating guidelines and rules, and when those rules are encroached upon, if it's not a flagrant viola-

tion, to give the user the benefit of the doubt as many times as possible without it being an insult to the corporation. At the point that it is clear that they cannot stay in compliance, we are then in a position to take whatever action is necessary, without it ever being inferred that it is being done because of the program content of the producer. It also means talking to members of the staff who have to be involved. I view our staff as being our front line, and it's important to consult them in making a decision about what's going on.

*Do you do things among staff so that it feels like a team?*

We talk a lot about it. And I will go and sit at the front desk and talk with people about stuff. The other thing that we will do is that a lot of us voluntarily in our free time do programming, and that's another thing that we do together. So someone may be the producer of a program and we'll ask each other to volunteer. I feel as though I have good accessibility because my background is in training and production and I spend a lot of my free time volunteering on productions and working in the facilities.

*Does working in that capacity change your relationship to staff somewhat?*

Yes! I am not removed. It lets me get very quick validation on the condition of facilities. I feel as though if I'm frustrated, then someone who has no television literacy must be extraordinarily frustrated. And if I'm frustrated and our user base is frustrated, then our front line must be really up against a wall trying to facilitate some stuff with these problems. So I feel like it helps me process stuff more quickly, and lets us process it more quickly.

*That's akin to working in the various roles of an organization so that you know it and remember what it's all about. As usual, I get a great sense of clarity and purpose from talking with you. I really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts.*

It's not perfect here, but we have a good time, and we do the best that we can, and I think it's a privilege that I get to do what I love for my work.

*That's clear. That's absolutely clear. Thanks so much.*

*Deb Luppold can be contacted at Portland Cable Access, 2766 M.L. King Blvd., Portland, OR 97301. Telephone 503/288-1515.*



# Community Video in Mexico

By Paul Whiting

Community television has historically included the goal of producing and disseminating information that is neglected or minimized in the mainstream media. That's a basic we all start from. This fundamental precept took on a global dimension for me during about half a dozen trips to Mexico, beginning with a study trip to Mexico in 1985, and ending with a year and a half project last fall.

The purpose of the first trip was to study hunger in the Third World, or as some more accurately call it, the Two Thirds World. My assignment was to document the experience on videotape. I had never come so closely in contact with real poverty and producing this tape was a truly transforming experience.

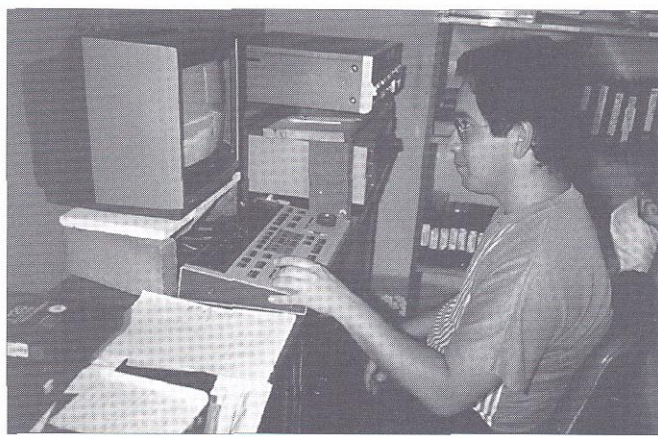
On my return, I became more and more aware how little Americans know of the reality south of our border, and in fact titled that tape *Another Reality*. More trips were made to Mexico to document further exchanges between our two cultures. With each visit, I came to know the Mexican people a little better, while between trips I was becoming acquainted with El Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans here in the United States. It was becoming clearer to me we were not getting very complete media information on issues of the South, particularly from their point of view. Our mainstream media were, and to some extent still are, locked into a predominately East-West rather than North-South mode.

Yet even within Mexico, mainstream media such as *Televisa* present a distorted view of reality for the average Mexican. Ninety percent of all Mexicans have some indigenous blood, but the talent of *Televisa* is overwhelmingly white. Such a point of view has got to be exceedingly destructive to self-esteem among the majority of Mexicans and in particular, those Mexicans at the margins of their culture. Additionally, much of the grassroots work in Mexico goes unreported by the major media there.

At about this time, I began to read Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This Brazilian educator has had substantial impact on the liberation movements throughout all of Latin America. Freire's thoughts began to percolate with my understanding of community video.



Recording narration for AMEXTRA videotape: Sergio Sanchez, director of AMEXTRA, and Daniel Santana, communications intern.



Daniel Santana editing the Spanish version of the tape.

Paulo Freire is well-known among educators and theologians for influencing an approach to liberating marginalized people by empowering them with the realization of owning their words. That is to say, much of the poor's oppression comes from the power classes' use of language in a self-serving way. Such meaning to words is sometimes accepted by the poor and plays into the hands of the powerful. This is not necessarily the willful or conscious purpose of the oppressor, but it is the result.

Yet even with conscientious teaching by well-meaning individuals, the liberating is often through the written word. But we in the First World live for better or worse in a post-literate world, i.e. television. And many marginalized people around the world, being aural and visual in their primary communications mode, are pre-literate. This gives our two worlds a unique commonality.

I decided it would be fascinating to explore how the aural-oral-visual language of television, when placed in the

hands of a pre-literate marginalized people might empower them. Using Freire's ideas, such people might suddenly find themselves even at an advantage over print-oriented people of the First World. They would have an instinctual feel for the medium we are only beginning to understand. At this point, their liberation would be radical and profound in that most contemporary and powerful medium of today, television.

With the help of Freire's insights, television would become less the medium of oppression and consumerism imposed by first-world delivery systems of satellites and mass distribution of videocassettes. Television would be in the hands of people most needing it to communicate solutions to common problems, to celebrate heritage, to instill ownership of language, and to reclaim their very existence.

Fortunately, Freire happened to be in the States for a conference and I arranged to meet him and present these ideas to him. He thought they were pedagogically sound and wished me the best.

On subsequent trips to Mexico I began to brainstorm with the leader of a Mexican grassroots group called AMEXTRA, or the Mexican

continued next page





## Tapes Available

Access centers interested in acquiring a tape from the Amextra project in Mexico, *Sowing the Seeds of Change* (20:00), or the Costa Rica tape in Spanish, *Caring for Sea Turtles in Gandoca* (approx. 25:00), should contact Paul Whiting at Full Circle Communications, 139 Wyoming Ave., Billings, MT 59101. Telephone 406/252-5647. Both are 1/2" VHS. The AMEXTRA tape is available in English or Spanish, though the Spanish version is a lesser generation. They are available for a nominal cost of dubbing and postage.

## Paolo Friere

Paolo Friere has been one of the prime advocates of the liberation movement in Latin America. He was exiled from Brazil in 1964 by the military rulers and returned to serve as a minister of education when democracy was restored in the '80s. He has been a consultant to UNESCO. Among his more well-known works are *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Education: The Practice of Freedom*.

Association for Rural and Urban Transformation. AMEXTRA is a Mexican non-profit organization working to improve the lives of rural and urban marginalized Mexican people. The group bases some of its thinking on Friere, and some on Biblical study. Its leaders came out of Mexican universities in the '60s, trying to apply their faith to the reality of the poor in their country. The director of the group, Sergio Sanchez, thought the video idea had merit, too. After more discussion, Sergio invited my wife and me to come live in Mexico to teach video to his staff and to the people they served. So, after gathering some funding for about a year and a half, we set off for Cuernavaca.

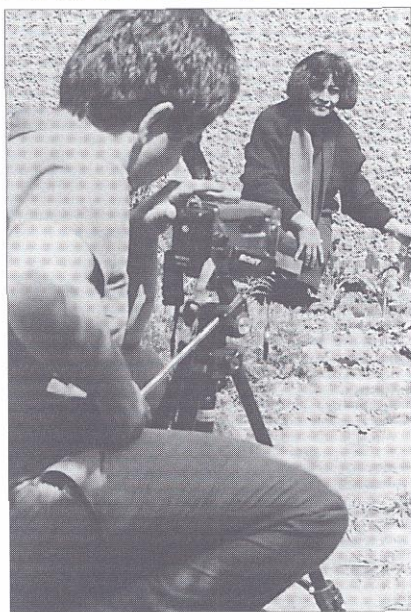
AMEXTRA had been donated a camcorder, but had no access to an editing system so I decided to bring my 1/2" VHS editing system with me. After a three-week bout with the Mexican customs officials and the help of another Mexican friend, we cleared customs and set up the system.

Where to begin? The important factor was to not impose our agenda on AMEXTRA but to encourage them to set their own. After much discussion, they decided they needed a promotional tape. The next question was how to cover the work of AMEXTRA, whose projects started just north of Mexico City and extended south 600 miles to the state of Chiapas on the Guatemalan border, and as far East as Merida in the Yucatan. Due to limitations of time and budget, we had to look for an alternative to traveling to all these places, but we did make a week-long trip to the state of Oaxaca. I also had unused footage from previous trips and we decided to use some of that, much of it in Spanish anyway, and to combine it with new footage when necessary.

AMEXTRA had many on its staff who were trained agronomists, veterinarians, agriculturalists, and so on, but none trained in communications. Many staff expressed interest in learning video and of course the ultimate goal was for the people in the villages, on the farms, and in urban *barrios* to picture their own reality.

However we soon ran up against a couple of logistical problems: available time from existing staff, and transportation. The distances in Mexico are huge, and many staff were in field positions far from Cuernavaca and busy with other duties of the organization.

We were in a tricky position: AMEXTRA, and particularly Sergio, wanted very much to have a tape but we resisted mightily "doing it for them". This would sim-



Interview on soy bean cultivation: AMEXTRA promotes alternative agriculture as a source of affordable nutrition.

ply run against the grain of the project. Yet we were the only people in the office with available time. But although we were North Americans, the only ones in the office at that, we were trusted. We were trusted because we had, and still have, profound respect for what these people are trying to do. The tape would still have substantial Mexican input: Mayo, a civil engineer, helped with audio and the unglamorous job of schlepping equipment. Mariana helped enormously with logging and selecting. David helped with transportation. Myra helped with encouragement and feedback. Omar did some stand-ups. Eugenio set up interviews. Pepe, the director

of the board, was helpful with conceptualizing the tape. And Sergio of course, as director, was in constant contact for content.

At one point AMEXTRA was faced with a critical choice: to produce the tape in Spanish or English. This surprised us because all along we had assumed the primary need was to promote AMEXTRA within Mexico. But the reality was that one staff member was soon leaving for California and felt the English version was needed right away. We were there at AMEXTRA's behest, and if they wanted it in English first, we would comply.

After several months of work, editing began. Editing went smoothly, pausing occasionally for iffy power during horrendous storms: the rainy season was upon us. The tape turned out quite well - Myra said she got goose bumps, Omar said it was the first tape he'd seen which did not make him feel guilty but made him want to participate, and finally Sergio himself said he was impressed how these crazy gringos understood so well the soul of AMEXTRA! The tape was indeed shown in California and got excellent comments.

But time was running out and we still had not produced the Spanish version. The AMEXTRA staff was still stretched thin with other projects of great need and for this version we simply had to have a native Mexican take charge. We needed someone who had video promise and the understanding of what AMEXTRA was all about. That, after all, was the whole point. At the premier showing of the tape, when all the compliments were being passed around about the tape, one young Mexican, new to the staff since our arrival, very politely asked why we hadn't done it in Spanish. Myra and I looked at each other, looked at Daniel, and said together, "Well, how would you like to do it?"

It was a critical and wonderful moment. We knew



Daniel had the interest and the ability. Only a few days before, he had looked at the edit controller and even though he spoke little English, almost immediately figured out for himself the difference between insert and assemble editing! This without ever having edited! He was highly talented: he was teaching himself WordPerfect, Greek, guitar, and cabinet work. We all knew he was just the person we were looking for.

But we needed to take up our life back in the States. There simply were not enough days left for thorough training of Daniel, and the time of our *despedida* (the traditional Mexican farewell party) had come.

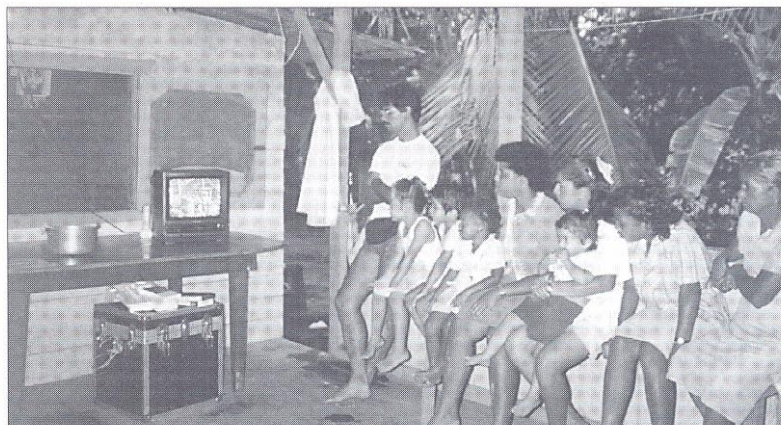
At the party, during all the speech-making, I made a public commitment: I would return to help Daniel do the Spanish version. Some other funding had just come through from the Intermedia Project of the National Council of Churches. The goal of Intermedia was empowering people in the Two-Thirds World with training projects in media. For example, another of their projects was funding the start-up of a women's radio station in Brazil. Our new funding would provide a training stipend for Daniel and my plane fare for one more trip.

And so, a few months later, I returned to Mexico. In three weeks, Daniel, with very little help, produced the tape in Spanish. In many ways this version turned out better. The language worked much more smoothly of course, and the whole piece had a better flow. And while I had been away, Daniel had made a training tape for some of the agricultural people on the AMEXTRA staff.

The project ended with a good feeling: AMEXTRA had on its staff someone who knew how to conceptualize, shoot, write, and edit. I had worked myself out of a job - I had always felt the goal of teaching was to make the teacher unnecessary. It is still our hope the project will ultimately extend to the *campesinos* themselves. For after all, it is they, more even than university-trained Mexicans, who must tell the stories that go untold and that all of us of privilege, Mexicans and Americans alike, need to hear.

Of course, we all are Americans. We are all citizens of the New World community, and we of the North have much to learn from this complex, creative, and fascinating people of the South. Community video with a global perspective will help us do just that.

*Paul Whiting now resides in Billings, Montana, where he has a company called Full Circle Communications. He also serves on the board of Community 7, the public access facility there. Contact him at 139 Wyoming Ave., Billings, MT 59101. Telephone 406/252-5647.*



*Community video in Talamanca, Costa Rica. Viewing a tape on saving the rain forest - the VCR and monitor were powered by a kerosene generator in a local general store.*



*Older fisherman in Costa Rica recalls the days when sea turtles were in abundance.*



*International team edits tape on sea turtle preservation along Costa Rica's Caribbean coast: an audio consultant from Italy, an editor from Panama and a videographer from Costa Rica.*

## ***In Costa Rica***

*There was another video project, independent of the other, that I became acquainted with by virtue of being in Mexico when I was. An American friend there had worked with an environmental group in Costa Rica and knew this group was training local indigenous people in video. He thought the director might be able to use what I knew, and put us in touch with each other. As a result, just after the end of our year and a half in Mexico, and before my return trip, I made a ten-day trip to Costa Rica. This was an incredible experience in its own right.*

*I spent several days in a hut built on stilts, with no running water or electricity, resting during the day so we could videotape the nocturnal egg-laying by the sea turtles on the beach a few hundred feet away. The project was pretty much in the hands of the local indigenous people, the Kuna of Panama (we were just a few kilometers from the border) and the Bri-bri of Costa Rica. Besides taping the turtles, we interviewed villagers and Costa Rican environmental officials on the need to protect the turtles' eggs against poachers.*

*Back in San Jose, we began editing this tape as well as continuing work on another. One of the completed tapes I saw was on an intercambio, an exchange between the Kuna and the Bri-bri taking place on an island off the coast of Panama. The purpose of this event was to document the two cultures as they engaged in friendly competitions of palm-roof making, blow-gun contests, canoe races and so on.*



## Book Looks at What Might Have Been

*Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy – The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-35* is the title of a new book by Robert W. McChesney exploring the early broadcast reform movement of the early '30s.

The work details the emergence and consolidation of U.S. commercial broadcasting economically, politically and ideologically. McChesney highlights the activities and arguments of the early broadcast reform movement, which held that "commercial broadcasting was inimical to the communication requirements of a democratic society and that the only solution was to have a dominant role for non-profit and noncommercial broadcasting."

McChesney is assistant professor of journalism and mass communications at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The book is available for \$36 a copy (plus \$2 shipping) through Oxford University Press, Orders Dept., 2001 Evans Road, Cary, NC 27513.

## Rethinking Community Communications Centers

By Greg Boozell

Over the past several years, there has been an increased interest reflected in these pages and at Alliance For Community Media conferences in the idea that public access television centers should broaden their services to include desktop publishing, computer bulletin boards, community radio stations and even art galleries. More than a year ago, this interest advanced to an endorsement which was reflected in the change of the name of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers to the Alliance For Community Media. While this publication has provided ample space to promote the conversion of public access television facilities, I've written the following to render such strategies problematic. Personally, I am dubious of the return that any access center may garner as a result of diversifying their respective technological service offerings. While the allure of additional technologies and media may be provocative for access administrators, new technologies only provide additional tools (and often barriers). Thanks to the existence of public access cable television, citizens have access to the most influential medium in existence today. The role of public access television staffs and managers is to create and facilitate meaningful public dialogue through cable television.

Most of the discussions regarding broadening to other electronic media revolve around a few central ideas. The first is that public access center's current singular financial reliance upon the cable television industry is risky and thus expanding to other media will create new revenue streams. Dirk Koning recently stated: "If you look at the community radio people who are a lot like us in a lot of regards, they look over at cable access folks and go, 'Look at those folks fat on franchise fees,' while these folks (community radio employees) are on the treadmill of survival. They've been at it for 25 years. The second position hired at every community radio station in this country is fund development."<sup>1</sup> Drawing a comparison between public access television and community radio stations is instructive. For the most part, the community's participation in community radio is limited to that of passive listener and underwriter during semiannual beg-athons. As public radio stations reliance upon "listeners like you", corporate sponsorship, and foundation funding has increased, the willingness of these stations to take programmatic risks has diminished. Media activist groups like Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) continue to document this.<sup>2</sup> Further, the upsurge in illegal,

microwatt, "rebel radio" stations attests to the failure of community radio to provide an adequate space for everyone to be heard.<sup>3</sup>

While our reliance upon the cable television industry may sound our collective financial death knell it is also the current life blood of most if not all public access television centers. My experience has been that foundation funding, user fees, fund raising events and other capital strategies do not provide the resources that access centers need to operate. While I agree that access administrators must always investigate new revenue streams, without state mandated funding from the corporate world the public's access to television or any other telecommunications medium will be short-lived. Instead of apologizing for that reliance upon corporate America, perhaps we should devise ways to create similar revenue streams from other telecommunications industries.

Another idea that seems to support diversification holds that since a volume of available telecommunications media has increased, access administrators should figure out how to provide the public with access to some or all of them. The major problem in this line of thought is that by and large, public access television centers are grossly underfunded to provide meaningful access to cable television, let alone other media. It is impressive that access centers improvise and create hours of programming on remarkably small budgets, although I would argue that the resources provided are inadequate to achieve much meaningful change in our respective communities. Adding a radio station won't help.

Much of the talk about community communications systems diverts discussion away from critical community application of cable television. Often access to technology is held to be equivalent to empowerment. I've repeatedly heard and read the mistaken conception that technology liberates. Tony Riddle writes: "Who has not heard of Rodney King? Who does not have the image of the magic moment (sic) etched forever into their brain?"<sup>4</sup> While it is fine to muse on the wonders of the camcorder as the great equalizer of civil society, the tangible results of the events surrounding the King beating leave much to be desired. Certainly the communities in South Central Los Angeles paid and are still paying for the violence that followed the verdict. While the images shot by that amateur videographer may be fixed in the national consciousness, there is little consensus as to their meaning.

Sometimes the blurring of liberation and access to technology have bordered on being self-congrat-



ulatory. At the 1993 Alliance Conference session entitled Creating Community Communications Centers, Kari Peterson stated: "In order for this to be a truly democratic society, everyone is going to have to have the opportunity to participate. This of course is something that access has done successfully for twenty years."<sup>5</sup> There is not room here to discuss the necessary elements to constitute a democratic society in this country. Suffice to say that while public access television centers have successfully survived and involved a great number of people in the medium over the past two decades, any record documenting the democratization of locales or communities via public access cable television are scarce. In fact, alarmingly little consensus has been reached among access facilitators even when discussing whether public access television's mission lie ultimately in facilitating adversarial communications processes or in creating and distributing commodity video products. I fear that some access centers would rather sidestep that issue entirely and buy some new hardware instead.

Romantic views of liberation resulting the use of personal computers have been advanced here as well. Howard Frederick writes that computers and faxes have decentralized international politics.<sup>6</sup> He supports this view based upon the pro-democracy movement and the events relayed to the west from Tiananmen Square by students and workers. This view is clearly short-sighted. Upon closer scrutiny it is obvious that the Chinese government suffered little or no retribution for their massacre in Tiananmen Square. In fact, China currently enjoys most-favored-nation trading status with the U.S.

Closer to home, it is alarming to think that access centers are going to extend their limited resources to provide computer services for their constituents. While over 65% of American homes are wired for cable<sup>7</sup>, less than 25% have personal computers.<sup>8</sup> Some might argue that this is precisely why cable access centers should add computer access. Of course, with such a limited number of personal computer households, one must wonder who these people will be talking to. Even more fundamentally, the fact that 25% of Illinois is illiterate further compounds the problem locally.

The issue is not solely one of weighing the relative merits of cable television and video versus personal computers and art galleries. Broadening constituent groups for an access center certainly has its merits. I fear that some of us are looking to expand into new technologies and services when we haven't really learned to utilize cable television very well. The political climate continues to demand that most access administrators focus on survival. As Herb Schiller writes in *Culture, Inc.*: "In fact,

there have been some heartening instances of community participation through public access channels. These, however, remain terribly limited,

to say nothing of being constantly threatened with revocation by cable owners who find it outrageous to be compelled to yield the tiniest fraction of their revenue producing facilities for community use."<sup>9</sup> The continued challenge to public access television's existence has precluded the opportunity for many within the movement to determine how the medium can best be used. The lack of many concrete examples of how public access TV has truly affected local politics or brought the disempowered to voice is troubling.

In short, access television providers are deceiving themselves if they believe that adding further technological hurdles will help bring disparate members of the community together. If we are trying to reach people, we needn't look further than the television set. Most people are sitting there already. I believe our job is to help reconstitute the use of television from its current role as consumer pacifier and use it instead to create genuine public spaces. As George Stoney noted in a recent interview, "The portapak itself doesn't cure anything. It is merely an instrument."<sup>10</sup> While this statement was made in reference to video equipment, the idea holds true for any communications technology.

*Greg Boozell is program director for Chicago Access Corporation, 322 S. Green St., Chicago, IL 60607-3502. Telephone 312/738-1400. Fax 312/738-2519.*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Alliance For Community Media National Conference, Atlanta, GA. Session entitled "Extend Communications Systems", 7/22/93.

<sup>2</sup>Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting may be contacted at 130 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10001 (212)633-6700.

<sup>3</sup>Here are several sources to learn more about microwatt radio. Paper Tiger Television produced a tape entitled, "Low Power Empowerment. They may be contacted at 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012 (212)420-9045. Also see *The Nation*, "Rebel Radio - Rappin' In The Hood", August 12/19, 1991.

<sup>4</sup>Anthony Riddle, "Rodney King, Gaia, and the Birth of the New P-Funk Nation". Delivered at the Alliance For Community Media National Conference, Atlanta, GA. 7/93.

<sup>5</sup>Alliance For Community Media National Conference, Atlanta, GA. Session entitled "Creating Community Communications Systems", 7/23/93.

<sup>6</sup>Howard Frederick, *Community Television Review*, "Computer Networks and the Emergence of Global Civil Society", November/December 1992. page 20.

<sup>7</sup>*Multichannel News*, September 20, 1993. page 35.

<sup>8</sup>"US Industrial Outlook for 1993," U.S. Department of Commerce, 1992.

<sup>9</sup>Hebert Schiller, *Culture, Inc.*, Oxford University Press, 1989, New York.

<sup>10</sup>Video interview conducted with George Stoney on May 12, 1993. Ann Arbor, MI.

## A Judicial View of Time Warner's PEG Challenge

**"The PEG and leased access provisions were enacted to serve a significant regulatory interest, viz., affording speakers with lesser market appeal access to the nation's most pervasive video distribution technology. . .Enabling a broad range of speakers to reach a television audience that otherwise would never hear them is an appropriate goal and a legitimate exercise of federal power. . .**

**"The leased access provisions are likewise content-neutral, and they are designed to serve a similar market regulatory function. The provisions promote fair competition by overcoming the natural tendency of cable operators to enhance the profitability of their affiliated programmers. . .**

**"Nor do the PEG and leased access provisions overreach. PEG use is negotiable, and leased access obligations are directly proportional to the number of channels a cable operator has available, never exceeding 15 percent of total capacity. Operators retain discretion over the remainder, and may, of course, utilize them as they wish, for their own programming or for that of affiliated programmers."**

**- Federal District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson regarding Time Warner's challenges to the 1984 and 1992 Cable Act provisions.**



## Reflections on 20 Years of Access in Austin

*Austin Community Television in Texas celebrated its twentieth anniversary this summer, a rare feat in a movement of the same age. The defense of this freedom continues, then as now, in Austin and across the country. Somehow, we usually find the will to enjoin the battle. It's been a "political miracle," as Stuart Heady, Chair of the Austin Cable Commission, says in the following remarks, excerpted here for CTR, from an address given by Heady at their anniversary celebration in June. Congratulations Austin.*

**By Stuart Heady**

**W**hat I have learned, through serving on the Austin Cable Commission for five years now, is that still, after 20 years, the politics of defending, supporting, or promoting public access are uncertain and difficult.

It takes more intellectual discipline and skill than you ever thought you could muster, just to understand what the arguments are really about – they are rooted in the kind of deep and powerful feelings that people generally can't express directly.

Sometimes you find out what real political courage is and what taking a stand means. Mostly however, you find out that what it takes to get anywhere means accepting the tedious, patience-trying nature of the political process. You have to go over the same ground over and over. People don't immediately just understand always what the purpose of all this is.

Recently, as I sat in the office of a former Johnson Administration official, one of the architects of the Great Society, which resulted in the beginning of ACTV, he expressed to me his private perception. He said it seemed to him that public access mostly amounted to the same few people grinding the same axes over and over again.

And mostly, when public officials think of public access, they tend to think of their experiences in dealing with the complaints they get about it from friends, contributors, and constituents. They are likely to be a little uneasy about public access and need a lot of reassurance as to why supporting the program is worth it.

If it weren't for the ironclad power of two hundred years of tradition and Federal law that backs up the First Amendment, maybe we would not be here today. For sure we would not, had it not been for all those people who have worked hard and fought and contributed an amazing amount of skill and imagination, intelligence and diplomacy – as well as anger and protest when all else failed.

Really, when you think about it, the growth of public access is a political miracle.

Twenty years for us in Austin represents a lot of battles in council chambers and offices, and courtrooms, not just here, but all across America. This is the American Revolution running in sequels.

### Austin Access User's Preamble Spells It Out

**Freedom of speech, as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, is a basic, defining principle of democracy at the community level, both for the general citizenry and for the leaders of municipal government. Robust and open discourse, through public access to television, promotes the social health of the community.**

**Public Access Television in Austin is managed under a first-come, first-served, content-neutral programming policy, which ensures fair and equal opportunity for all users of the service.**

**All rules and procedures for the use of public access resources are based on the principle that each program's creator (producer) is personally responsible for his or her expression, that this is the best means of guaranteeing individual freedom of speech rights. Therefore, it is the producer – not the City of Austin, its officials, or the managers of public access resources – who is completely and solely responsible for the exercise of his or her free speech rights, and any legal consequences arising therefrom.**

**The legality of any given speech or expression may only be determined by a court of law. Because of this, and the First Amendment concerns above, the City does not make any regulations concerning the content of speech cablecast over the public access facilities, other than requiring its legality. The City's role is restricted to providing a conduit for the exercise of individual, non-profit, free speech, and it therefore assumes no responsibility for the content of such expression.**

**Producers' free speech rights are protected and enhanced by public access television. But the responsibilities inherent in the right of free expression should not be taken lightly. It is the producer who must analyze the effect of his or her program on the community, and determine the appropriateness of the material to be cablecast, and who must weigh and understand his or her liability.**

**This is the price we as free citizens pay for the opportunity of free speech in America.**

Muskets have been replaced with copy machines.

Skirmishes in the fight for Freedom are now in the form of press conferences and debates and pleasant Sunday afternoon credibility-building public relations events like this.

As we stand here today, we are standing in for the Founding Fathers, who I think would say this:

"This is not about television. Something far more profoundly important is going on here and it has nothing to do with television."

The all pervasive Network TV conditioning we have all been subjected to, all of our lives, mostly prevents us from being able to see that television as we have known it – and the instinct that is alive in the form of public access – are profoundly different.

When you fully empower Americans who are qualified to express themselves only because they are Americans, and not because they have been authorized first by the conditioning process, something happens that is about America – not about Television.

When you allow people to express themselves as they will, according to their own taste or aesthetics, whether or not they are any good at it, whether it be in classic speech forms, or in religious, musical, cultural, political, or purely personal terms, you rip the cover off of the attempt to control society by controlling minds – you cleanse the mental environment of that pollution – and you allow reality to replace illusion.

And, sure, it isn't all sweet and pretty. Reality in America is something to deal with.

You find that behind the painted scenes and nice stage sets there is



uncertainty in the American soul, there is that nasty American tradition of hypocrisy, there is paranoia. There are stupidities. There are class and ethnic prejudices and hatreds. There is racism. There is sexism and egoism and selfishness.

Yes, there is some pain associated with freedom of speech.

But no pain, no gain: this is an essentially American process. This is the hard ferment of the so-called melting pot, a hot crucible in which a disparate and alienated population of separate individuals living in isolated enclaves becomes a community.

This is not about television. This is not a TV show. This is about healing a society full of conflict and anger. This is real.

If you look at what we have accomplished over the last twenty years, especially if you look at the whole picture including municipal and county government access, and educational access in use with the community college system and with AISD, along with what ACTV has been doing, you see something quite stunning.

We have actually used this technology as a means to focus the attention and energy of the community's most active citizens on local problem solving and dialogue about the future, in a way that is clearly beyond the budgets of all the local government bodies combined.

People who differ in outlook, age, social background, and culture have come forward out of a passive role as watchers to become active participants in the community building process.

We in fact have helped in a major way to renew the institution of local democracy and to promote a strong sense of community.

We in fact are bringing about the 21st century Austin that lives in all our best hopes.

This is quite an accomplishment, and you who have been involved in any way, you have done something to be proud of.

Looking at the next twenty years, we are on the crossroads of history. As channels of information multiply into a confusion of infinite choices, will the First Amendment have any meaning in this new electronic continent, this New World which we are creating?

Or will the First Amendment become a quaint artifact of the bygone print era?

Stay tuned.

For as long as the videotape of this event shall last, this will be at issue. The process of democracy is just that way. First you work and persist and deal with problems until a solution emerges. Then you persistently visit and revisit the solution, and there is no way out of this because we are human beings and there are so many of us and because we are free to disagree.

This is healthy and dynamic and this is the ethic and the lesson of democracy: You must participate and you must persist in keeping this process dynamic, locally and nationally. This is not about television. This is about keeping democracy alive and about keeping hope alive.

*Stuart Heady is chair of the Austin Cable Commission, 2106 East Side Drive, Austin, TX 78704.*



## Little City Foundation's *Project Vital* Goes High Performance

Little City Foundation's *Project Vital*, a training curriculum that teaches community television production skills to people with developmental challenges, was recently featured in the summer edition of the national arts magazine *High Performance*. Project Vital's award-winning video magazine, *Given Opportunities*, highlights the stories and successes of people with developmental challenges such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy and autism, and is seen on many community television stations nationwide.

"From the point of view of art history and criticism Project VITAL has demonstrated some of the most important theories currently being written about in academic and professional circles," writes *High Performance*'s Linda Frye Burnham. "Not only does Project VITAL use imagery, content and technology to allow us access to the thoughts and feelings of people with challenges, through training in cable access it puts the control of production into the hands of these people. Because of LCF's diligent distribution system, ample evidence of that control is demonstrated every time a community cable station broadcasts a video by a VITAL graduate. VITAL did something practical with art theory, and presented it for millions to see. Viewed through this lens, the media truly belong to all people. In some important and far-reaching ways, Project VITAL can be said to have changed the world."

"To exclude the point of view of any individual based on a misperception of his/her ability to function 'normally' skews our basic concept of human reality," says Project VITAL creator and Little City Foundation Executive Director Alan Dachman in the article. "Inclusion is not charity, but an essential philosophy that only makes life richer and more meaningful for all."

Readers who would like more information about *Given Opportunities*... should contact Little City Foundation, 4801 W. Peterson Ave., Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60646. Telephone 312/282-2207. For information about *High Performance*, contact the magazine at 1641 18th St., Santa Monica, CA 90404. Telephone 310/315-9383.



**O**n the opposite page you will see IRS Form 5768. Based on recent research I am recommending that community television organizations that operate as nonprofit corporations register with the IRS as an NPO declaring their desire to lobby. The process is called "To Elect" and it protects you immensely. A simple board vote and completion and submission of the form is all that is required "To Elect". As you will read below from the following excerpted script by the Independent Sector, a national forum to encourage giving, volunteering and not-for-profit initiative, this will not subject you to any undo scrutiny from the IRS and it will ultimately protect you. Aside from the technicality of Electing, this might prompt your board to think more about effective lobbying and the critical role it plays for nonprofits and especially access survival. The following comes from a slide show done by the nonprofit Independent Sector. Read on and Elect!

– Dirk Koning

## **"All politics is local."**

– Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives

**Is lobbying legal?** It's not only legal but encouraged by Congress and IRS.

**How much may my group spend on lobbying?** A generous amount: 20 percent of the first \$500,000 of annual expenditures, 15 percent of the next \$500,000 and so on to \$1 million!

**May all nonprofits spend that much?** No, only those that "elect." **Elect what?** Elect to come under generous provisions of the 1976 lobby law. **How do we elect?** Have your group's governing body vote. Sign and send Form 5768 to the IRS. That's all there is to it.

**Will the IRS "red flag" us for audit if we elect?** Absolutely not. The IRS manual makes that clear.

**What if we don't elect?** You're subject to a "insubstantial rule." **What does "insubstantial rule" mean?** "More than insubstantial" lobbying causes you to lose your tax exemption and with it the right to receive tax deductible contributions. **What is "more than insubstantial" lobbying?** Not clear. Several court decisions have addressed definitions.

**What did the courts find?** • Court decision one – 1955: Five percent of total activities not substantial. • Court decision two – 1972: Each case evaluated according to "facts and circumstances." • Court decision three – 1974: Percentage test not appropriate. Single official position statement could be "substantial."

# **The Law & Lobbying by Nonprofits**

**How can we avoid this confusion?** Elect to come under the 1976 lobby law.

**Will our tax status be affected if we elect?** No.

**If we elect the 1976 lobby law, which of our activities will be lobbying?** Any attempt to influence legislation through communication with member, employee of legislative body, or government official or employee who may participate in formulation of legislation (called direct lobbying), or any attempt to influence legislation through attempt to affect opinions of general public or segment thereof (called grassroots lobbying).

**Would you please explain?** Direct lobbying is a nonprofit organization (including its members who reside at the grassroots!) contacting a policymaker on behalf of legislation. You are doing direct lobbying in your communications if you: a. Refer to specific legislation; and b. Reflect on a view on its merits.

Grassroots lobbying is a nonprofit organization contacting the general public urging the general public to contact policymakers in support of legislation. You are doing grassroots lobbying if, in communication with the general public, you: a. Refer to specific legislation; b. Reflect a view on its merits; and c. Encourage the general public to contact legislators.

**May we spend all of our total allowable lobbying expenditures on grassroots lobbying?** No. Only 25 percent may be spent on grassroots.

**Is there a similar limitation on direct lobbying?** No. You can spend 100 percent of allowable expenditures on direct lobbying.

**How do the new IRS regulations on the 1976 lobby law affect lobbying?** Provides helpful details regarding latitude permitted for direct and grassroots lobbying.

**What are some key issues covered by the lobbying regulations?** • For grassroots lobbying there is a special rule for mass media messages. • Regulations define when materials, developed in the previous six months and used in lobbying, are a lobbying expenditure. • Regulations explain how to allocate costs of communication that includes both lobbying and nonlobbying expenditure.

**Is that all we need to know about the regulations?** It depends. If you plan extensive lobbying, you should be acquainted with the regulations. Keep in mind that lobbying latitude under the 1976 law is generous.

**May nonprofits use private foundation grants to lobby?** Private foundation grants which for "general purposes" may be used by nonprofits to lobby, but "earmarked" funds may not.

**May nonprofits use community foundation grants to lobby?** Nonprofits may receive grants from community foundations which are earmarked for lobbying.

**Is lobbying by volunteers a lobbying expenditure?** Only when the nonprofit spends money.

**Are there some limits on all lobbying by nonprofits?** No. There are no limits on self-defense lobbying.

**What is self-defense lobbying?** Lobbying on legislation affecting the existence of the organization itself, its powers and duties, its tax-exempt status, or deductibility of contributions to it. **What are examples of self-defense lobbying?** Lobbying in support of charitable deductions for nonitemizers, or against legislation proposing disallowing tax exemption.

**May nonprofits carry out voter education during a political campaign?** Yes, but can't work in support of a candidate. **What voter education is legal?** It is legal to inform a candidate of your position. If a candidate goes on record on your issue, the candidate can distribute the statement, but you can't.

**Do you mean that nonprofits can never publish or distribute statements by a candidate?** They cannot. This includes candidate's statements to the media, general public, or nonprofit organization – even if it wasn't solicited by the candidate.

**How about questionnaires to candidates?** Nonprofits with a broad range of concerns, (e.g. League of Women Voters) can safely disseminate responses from questionnaires, but questions must cover a broad range of concerns, be framed without bias, and given to all candidates.

**How about distributing voting records of candidates?** Okay if done throughout the year, not just during a campaign.

**May you invite candidates to a public**

continued on page 24



**Election/Revocation of Election by an Eligible  
Section 501(c)(3) Organization To Make  
Expenditures To Influence Legislation**

(Under Section 501(h) of the Internal Revenue Code)

For IRS  
Use Only **▲**

Name of organization

Employer identification number

Address (number and street)

City or town, state, and ZIP code

- 1 Election.**—As an eligible organization we hereby elect to have the provisions of section 501(h) of the Code, relating to expenditures to influence legislation, apply to our tax year ending \_\_\_\_\_ and all subsequent tax years until revoked. (Month, day, and year)

**Note:** This election must be signed and postmarked within the first taxable year to which it applies.

- 2 Revocation.**—As an eligible organization we hereby revoke our election to have the provisions of section 501(h) of the Code, relating to expenditures to influence legislation, apply to our tax year ending \_\_\_\_\_ (Month, day, and year)

**Note:** This revocation must be signed and postmarked before the first day of the tax year to which it applies.Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I am authorized to make this (check applicable box) ☐ election/ ☐ revocation on behalf of the above named organization.

(Signature of officer or trustee)

(Title)

(Date)

**Instructions**

(References are to the Internal Revenue Code.)

Section 501(c)(3) provides that an organization exempt under that section will lose its tax-exempt status and its qualification to receive deductible charitable contributions if a substantial part of its activities are carried on to influence legislation. Section 501(h), however, permits certain eligible 501(c)(3) organizations to elect to make limited expenditures to influence legislation. An organization making the election will, however, be subject to an excise tax under section 4911 if it spends more than the amounts permitted by that section. Furthermore, the organization may lose its exempt status if its lobbying expenditures exceed the permitted amounts by more than 50% over a 4-year period. For any tax year in which an election under section 501(h) is in effect, an electing organization must report the actual and permitted amounts of its lobbying expenditures and grass roots expenditures (as defined in section 4911(c)) on its annual return required under section 6033. See Schedule A (Form 990). Each electing member of an affiliated group must report these amounts for both itself and the affiliated group as a whole.

To make or revoke the election, enter the ending date of the tax year to which the election or revocation applies in item 1 or 2, as applicable, and sign and date the form in the spaces provided.

**Eligible Organizations.**—A section 501(c)(3) organization is permitted to make the election if it is not a disqualified organization (see below) and is described in:

- (a) section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii) (relating to educational institutions),

- (b) section 170(b)(1)(A)(iii) (relating to hospitals and medical research organizations),
- (c) section 170(b)(1)(A)(iv) (relating to organizations supporting government schools),
- (d) section 170(b)(1)(A)(vi) (relating to organizations publicly supported by charitable contributions),
- (e) section 509(a)(2) (relating to organizations publicly supported by admissions, sales, etc.), or
- (f) section 509(a)(3) (relating to organizations supporting certain types of public charities other than those section 509(a)(3) organizations that support section 501(c)(4), (5), or (6) organizations).

**Disqualified Organizations.**—The following types of organizations are not permitted to make the election:

- (a) section 170(b)(1)(A)(i) organizations (relating to churches),
- (b) an integrated auxiliary of a church or of a convention or association of churches, or
- (c) a member of an affiliated group of organizations if one or more members of such group is described in (a) or (b) of this paragraph.

**Affiliated Organizations.**—Organizations are members of an affiliated group of organizations only if: (1) the governing instrument of one such organization requires it to be bound by the decisions of the other organization on legislative issues, or (2) the governing board of one such organization includes persons who (i) are specifically designated representatives of another such organization or are members of the governing

board, officers, or paid executive staff members of such other organization, and (ii) by aggregating their votes have sufficient voting power to cause or prevent action on legislative issues by the first such organization.

For more details, see section 4911 and section 501(h).

**Note:** A private foundation (including a private operating foundation) is not an eligible organization.

**Where To File.**—Mail Form 5768 to the applicable Internal Revenue Service Center listed below.

If the principal office of the organization is located in:	Use this address:
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee	Atlanta, GA 39901
Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Wyoming	Austin, TX 73301
Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia	Cincinnati, OH 45999
Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington	Fresno, CA 93888
Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania (ZIP codes beginning with 169-171 and 173-196 only), Rhode Island, Vermont	Holttsville, NY 00501
Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin	Kansas City, MO 64999
District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania (ZIP codes beginning with 150-168 and 172 only), Virginia, any U.S. possession, any foreign country	Philadelphia, PA 19255





## Association of Moving Image Archivists

The Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA) is excited about making contact with Alliance members because there is no systematic preservation of cable programming in the USA at present, except for C-SPAN and the CNN library.

AMIA is a professional organization established to provide a means for cooperation among individuals concerned with the collection, preservation, exhibition and use of moving image materials. The objectives of AMIA are to exchange information, promote archival activities and professional standards, facilitate research, and encourage public awareness of film and video presentation.

Membership is open to any interested individual, institution, organization or corporation. Membership dues are \$50 for individuals, \$150 for non-profit organizations, and \$300 for for-profit organizations.

Interested parties should contact the Association of Moving Image Archivists c/o National Center for Film and Video Preservation, The American Film Institute, 2021 North Western Avenue P.O. Box 27999, Los Angeles, CA. 90027 (213) 856-7637

## Why Save Video Tape?

# Archiving Access Programs

By Bonnie G. Wilson

**M**y job as Curator of Sound and Visual Collections at the Minnesota Historical Society is to save things, including videotape programming and productions. It is also to help others save stuff, because we can't do it all ourselves. I noted that all those in attendance at the Alliance's 1992 Convention workshop on archiving tapes were interested in saving tapes, and had begun already to do so in some fashion or another.

Why save? Isn't it your job to facilitate creation? Yes, but if you believe it is valuable now, you have to believe some of it will be of value 50 or 100 years from now.

**Why Save Video Tape?** The deliberate decision to save video materials is especially critical for two reasons:

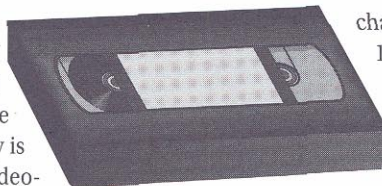
1. Video tape is ephemeral, not just in physical preservation terms, but in how long people tend to keep track of it and care about it. For example, is this what happens to the videos from the Hometown Video Festival awards?:

- the tape is made,
- the tape is played locally,
- the tape wins an award,
- it get some distribution, locally, regionally, nationally,
- the tape goes home with the producer,
- the producer get busy with other things,
- the tape eventually gets reused, loaned to a friend indefinitely, or tossed out.

2. Organizations, including cable companies and access operations, tend to save paper files (annual reports, newsletters, letters from the public). If a concerted effort is not made to save the REAL STUFF (i.e., the videotaped results of your real activity), your paper files may be all that is left to represent you later on in the 21st century.

Think of this — all major local historical societies and archives save the local newspaper. The only record of TV activity that survives may be these local newspaper TV guides, and access programs are typically not included. In Minnesota, access productions represent a greater share of locally produced television programming than any other source, but you'd never notice that in the daily newspapers.

Also, print material tends to survive because it is not machine dependent — you don't have to put it into a special machine to see it. To view video, of course, machines are necessary. And constantly



changing. So if your successor finds old 1/2-inch open reel tape in your archives, he or she may be tempted to toss it because there is no machine to play it on.

**What to Save.** Deciding on criteria for saving is a commonplace problem. It's like going through junk mail — what do I open?

From a "collectables" standpoint: what will bring the most money in the future? Saving those items no one else is saving. (Should you have been squirreling away the Publisher's Clearinghouse packets?)

But we're not in PEG access to reap a bundle of cash in the future; we're here to allow the reflection of community ideas, thoughts, and culture now and for the future. So we should save what is significant.

Now, there's the catch — what is significant?

Can we place ourselves in the future and look backward to the present and say, "Now that was important, I'm sure glad we saved that!" Not always. Who would have thought that one of the most significant recent discoveries would turn out to be the pilot of "I Love Lucy"? An archivist spent years lovingly preserving the "I Love Lucy" shows, only to discover that what people really wanted was the pilot. No one had bothered to save that except a staff person who decided to take it home.

So, we can't be seers, gazing into the crystal ball, or cathode ray tube, as the case may be. But we can make some educated guesses.

For example, we could save all the award winners from the Hometown USA and other awards programs. That would make our job really easy. But would that be accurate? Are you all about winning awards? Or does PEG access have other agendas?

Access intends to present as wide a variety of constituencies as possible. And all the constituencies aren't winning awards.

Here are some other strategies:

1. Look at your mission statement. Any clues? For example, Cable Access—St. Paul (CA—SP) emphasizes "democratic use" by "various segments of the community". It names "institutions", "community organizations" and "individuals" as its tripartite emphasis. Its archives, then, should have representation, possible equal representation, from all three.

The CA—SP annual report declares "Diversity is the measure of success" and goes on to list the kinds of institutions and types of individuals it hopes to serve and the statistics on which they



have served. That would be an excellent list from which to choose a representative sampling for the archives.

2. Tape off-air programming, perhaps one day each week (or other selected schedule) and preserve what you get. That should be a random sample, which can be reviewed periodically to see how "representative" it turned out to be.

3. Do save your award winners, in order to address the quality issue for those interesting in saving the "best". Establish a consortium of local sister organizations to preserve programs of particular excellence or impact.

Whichever strategy you choose, the most important thing is that you decide to save something.

**How to Set Up Your Archive.** Ask for help from archivists and librarians. Three ideas:

1. Look to your public library and local historical society for professional help in selecting, organizing, and inventorying your collection. They may not do the work for you, but they will train volunteers or staff and help set up your systems. Some may want your archives.

2. There is a professional organization in this field, the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA). They have a very good newsletter, with a bibliography of readings on preservation and cataloging, plus notices of grants and activities all over the country. This sounds like a good connection for the Alliance to make. Contact the secretariat of the AMIA at 213/856-7637.

3. When you are ready for prime time video archiving, coordinate with the National Center for Film and Video Preservation (NCFVP). They maintain a national database of all films and videotapes in the country called the National Moving Image Database (NAMID). A NAMID database coordinator said that they would be ready to accept records of independent productions that are preserved in permanent archives. In order to participate in this database, there is an eleven step process that must be worked through. NAMID can be contacted at 213/856-7700.

**The Next Step.** Discussion among attendees at the Archiving Workshop at the St. Paul conference led to a couple of conclusions.

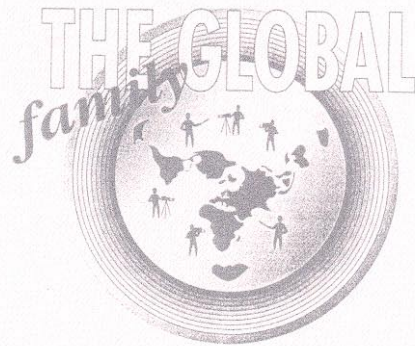
1. The Alliance should put together a small committee of interested access archivists-to-be to recommend industry-wide guidelines and options for saving access programming. We should establish professionally recognized database formats and preservation standards, in order to offer a common framework for local access operations to plug into. A common framework would aid with cataloging and with interfacing with established archiving institutions.



2. The Alliance should establish formal ties with AMIA and NCFVP. (See sidebar on preceding page.)

*Bonnie G. Wilson is curator of Sound and Visual Collections for the Minnesota Historical Society. She has worked since 1972 with photographs, moving images, music, oral history, and graphics collected by the Society. She has a Master's Degree in Library Science with a concentration in audio-visual media and frequently lectures on the history of photography and on preserving photos. She is currently working on the acquisition of television news and documentary footage. She may be reached at 612/296-1275.*

*This article was edited by Neal Gosman for the Community Television Review.*



## Video Olympiade Update

**Plans for the Second Olympiade of Local Video and TV Creation to be held next year in Scandinavia continue to be firmed up as deadlines near.**

While categories remain the same as noted in the last issue of CTR, a few important changes have occurred since then. Among them, the name has been changed to **The Global Family** and the actual dates of the event have been confirmed as **May 7-11, 1994**.

**Other criteria to note include:**

- All submissions will be handled through the Alliance regions, where finalists will be selected.
- The winner in each category will be part of the Alliance's official delegation if they wish. The categories are **Social Impact, Local Tradition, Young People, Local Channel and Open Category**.
- It's not too early to start financial planning, Delegates cost for the five day event will be about \$150. Non-delegates will pay around \$450. Price does not include airfare to Copenhagen.
- SVHS is the preferred format, and NTSC is okay.
- Program length for each category must be strictly adhered to - 20 minutes for the Social Impact category, 10 minutes for the other categories. Programs or series may be edited down to fit. Programs running longer will be disqualified. Programs should address universal concerns or have a large community focus, addressing a wide audience. The story should have visual and audio cohesiveness and be well-told. Production doesn't have to be expensive, but produced solidly to convey the theme.
- Check with your regional international chair regarding deadlines for submission and other details. Final selections on the national level will be made from the regional winners sometime early in January.



# NATOA Does Disney at Annual Conference

By Jon Koeze

**T**he mechanics of cable regulation and the development of the national Information Infrastructure continued to be hot topics at the 1993 conference of the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA). The conference, which convened at the Disney World Contemporary Resort in Orlando, Florida September 8 -11, brought together a diverse group of community access programmers, cable industry representatives, communications attorneys, media theorists, and local, federal and state government regulators and representatives.

More than 500 attended the conference, according to NATOA's René Winsky. "It was a very successful conference in terms of attendance, participation and the diversity of speakers, which included five representatives of the Federal Communications Staff, plus Commissioner Dugan."

The conference was of particular interest to cable regulators because 1993 was the year when many provisions of the Cable Consumers Protection and Competition act of 1992 became effective and September 1 was the date when many new rules and regulations imposed by the Federal Communications Commission became effective. Many conference sessions focused on the impact, effects and mechanics of federal government actions.

One session, entitled "Nuts and Bolts of Rate regulation", gave many details of the rate regulation process and discussed maneuvers which were being used by cable companies to minimize the effects of rate regulation. The session was so popular with cable regulators it was conducted twice during the conference. Speakers included Sandy Wilson of the FCC and Attorneys William Cook and Joe Van Eaton. Several attendees expressed their displeasure to Ms. Wilson because of complaints from subscribers that monthly bills have increased despite an FCC rate freeze until November 15. At one point, she asked everyone in the room to raise their hand if they felt the "average monthly bill" had increased. About three-quarters of the room raised their hands. She then invited everyone to write her a detailed letter outlining the changes which had caused this increase.

Other key sessions on the regulation "Track" included:

- "Beyond Rate Regulation & Customer Service: The Rest of the Act., including a discussion on such topics and full signal interdiction, retransmission consent/ must carry and the art of hidden rate increases.

- "Strategic Planning for a changing Telecommunications World", covering the franchise issues of tomorrow's telecommunications.

- "Picture Perfect?: FCC's new signal Quality

Standards", on understanding new requirements for signal quality standards.

- "\$\$\$ - Enhancing Your Revenue Picture - \$\$\$," discussing many details of franchise fee compliance.

- "Enriching Local Government Communications Networks," covering network alternatives such as I-NETS, FOULs Alts and the like.

- "Customer Service Standards: A new priority," how to implement new standards and how they will impact existing franchises.

- "1992 Cable Act Overview".

- "Franchise Renewals on a Regulated Industry".

Larry C. Irving, Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration in Washington D.C., gave the Thursday morning plenary address entitled "The 1992 Cable Act and Beyond", and FCC commissioner Ervin S. Duggan presented the keynote luncheon address "Shaping the Nation's Evolving Telecommunications Infrastructure". Both addresses gave very revealing insight on the direction of national policy for telecommunications.

The development of new technology, infrastructure and services was a constant theme during the conference. At the final general session, a panel of telecommunications leaders discussed the "Local On-Ramp to the National Electronic Superhighway". Cable and Telephone Company representatives were very clear on their attitude towards franchise fee requirements. Both felt that franchise fees were a hindrance to competition and infrastructure investment. A federal government representative also indicated that the national information infrastructure will be just that and local governments will have a very decreasing role in its development.

On the lighter side, the conference featured a reception at Church Street Station in Downtown Orlando, a visit to Universal Studios Theme Park and tours of the Nickelodeon Network Studios located inside the Universal Studios complex. After the Nick tour, attendees were feted at a reception in a back lot and invited to be the television audience for a Nick television production.

Bill Squadron, the new president of NATOA, noting the increase of activity on the federal level, termed the conference a big success. "Everyone has agreed that this year's combination of panelists, speakers and location have resulted in one of the best conferences NATOA has ever had."

Next year's conference will be held in Reno Sparks, Nevada, September 19-22, 1994. For more information on NATOA, call 202/626-3160.

*Jon Koeze is cable administrator for the city of Grand Rapids, 300 Monroe NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503. Telephone 616/456-3869.*

## The Community TV Worker's Cyberspace Handbook

**It's a bold new world out there. Communications are no longer only audio, visual images, and ink on paper. In the cyberspace, it's all been reduced to binary digital pulses, and increasingly community television workers are having to become technology translators.**

**In the next issue of CTR, Guest Editor Lauren-Glenn Davitian and co-editor Dirk Koning take us on a journey through the cyberspace - exploring the economic and political landscapes in cyberland, introducing the basics of on-line communication, and cruising comfortably down the information highway to bring us up to speed as we visit freenets, civic nets, the Internet, and other electronic destinations.**

**It's the kind of issue of which your access center may want more than one copy, a necessary item to pack in our dop kits as we travel the electronic superhighway. You won't want to leave home without it. To order copies in bulk, contact CTR at 15 Ionia SW, Suite 201, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4413. Telephone 616/454-6663. Fax 616/454-6698. Cost is \$2 each with a minimum order of 25, plus shipping and handling.**



**W**e'd like to get some feedback from readers on what you like, don't like, and would like to see in future issues of CTR. This information will help us to set priorities for future issues and to better serve both Alliance membership and other readers. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey and return it to us – by mail or by fax – as soon as possible. Address and number at the end. We'll let you know what your collective thoughts are in a future issue.

## READER SURVEY

A chance to share your thoughts on CTR.

- Are you a member of the Alliance? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, where do you pick up CTR? \_\_\_\_\_.
- Is CTR passed on to you? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, by whom? \_\_\_\_\_.
- Do you pass CTR on to others? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, to whom? \_\_\_\_\_.
- If CTR were available by e-mail, could you, would you access it? \_\_\_\_\_.
- How long have you been reading CTR? \_\_\_\_\_.
- On average, what percentage of each issue do you read? \_\_\_\_\_%.
- Do you read the ads in CTR? \_\_\_\_\_.
- Are You
 

<input type="checkbox"/> An access staff member	<input type="checkbox"/> A board or commission member
<input type="checkbox"/> An independent producer	<input type="checkbox"/> A community user
<input type="checkbox"/> A regulator	<input type="checkbox"/> An elected representative
<input type="checkbox"/> A volunteer	
- Are you involved in
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Public Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Access	
<input type="checkbox"/> Government Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Regulation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
- What sorts of items in CTR do you most often read? (Example: Public policy items, political struggles, technical tips, theme articles, how to articles, staff and center profiles, regional reports, etc.)
- What sorts of information have you found most helpful?
- In what areas could CTR do a better job or provide better or more in-depth coverage?
- What areas are not covered that ought to be?
- What do you like best and least about the format and layout of CTR?
 

Best \_\_\_\_\_

Least \_\_\_\_\_
- In the time that you've been reading CTR, what single item have you found most useful?
- CTR will be changing its name to Community Media Review. What other forms of media would you be interested in reading about?

Please feel free to elaborate in longer form if you wish, and thank you for your participation in this informal survey. Please send your completed survey to: CTR, 15 Ionia SW, Suite 201, Grand Rapids, MI 49503-4113, or fax to 616/454-6698.



**forum to get their views?** Yes, if you 1) invite all candidates, are 2) evenhanded in promoting, 3) don't state your views or comment on candidates' views; and 4) all candidates have opportunity to answer questions.

**May you publish information from the public forum?** Yes, in a newsletter, if published regularly, and circulation is limited to organization's members. Candidates should be given equal opportunity to give their views.

**Is urging voters to put a proposal on a ballot, lobbying?** Yes.

**Is urging members of a legislature to put a law passed by a legislature on a ballot, lobbying?** Yes.

**May a 501 (c)(3) organization lobby indirectly through a 501 (c)(4) organization?** Yes.

**Why consider a (c)(3) - (c)(4) "arrangement"?** A (c)(4) may spend all of its funds on lobbying, but contributions to it aren't tax deductible.

**Are there any cautions regarding the**

**combination (c)(4) arrangement?** Keep good records showing clearly how staff time, equipment, floor office space costs, etc., are divided between groups.

**May a 501 (c)(3) set up a political action committee (PAC)? No. May a 501 (c)(4) set up a PAC?** Yes.

**May nonprofits use federal funds to lobby?** No (with the exception of lobbying specifically authorized by federal law).

**May nonprofits use federal funds for self-defense lobbying?** Yes, for example, to avoid material impairment of an organization's authority to perform the grant, contract, or agreement.

**This is more than I really wanted to know - can you summarize?** 1) Believe in your cause. 2) Tell your legislator how his/her constituents will be affected by your proposal (give examples, illustrations). 3) Be persistent. 4) Lobbying is often a nonprofit's best service.

*Excerpted with permission from a script by Independent Sector, 1828 L Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone 202/223-8100.*

## Public Policy

continued from page 6

ernments; schools and libraries; labor unions; national non-profits, such as AARP, YMCA and YWCA, Girl and Boy Scouts and the Red Cross; churches; national constituent groups, including the NAACP and the National Organization for Women (NOW); and political parties. These groups will either benefit or suffer as public space in telecommunications is either addressed or ignored in emerging policies. As the Alliance works with these groups, we may be contacting you to see the level of participation in your community.

The terms and concepts "consumer" and "market-driven" are increasingly replacing and are on the verge of eliminating "public" and "public interest" in current corporate media speech. For any long term societal benefit and health, it is imperative that telecommunications policy reverse this course and respect and value people human rights above property and consumerism.

*Alan Bushong chairs the Alliance's Public Policy Committee. He is executive director of Capital Community Television, 585 Liberty St., Salem, OR 97308-2342. Telephone 503/588-2288. Fax 503/588-6055.*

## December 1 Deadline Set

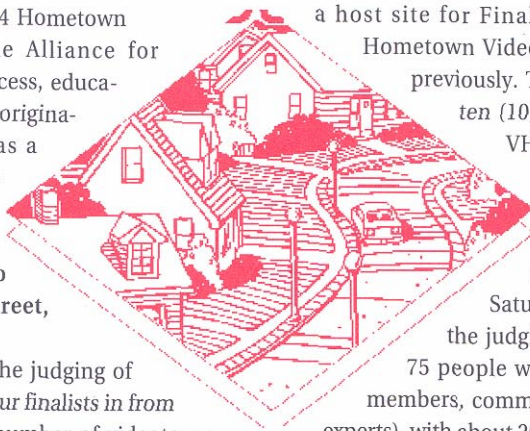
# 1994 Hometown Video Judging Sites Sought

**P**lans are now being made for the 1994 Hometown Video Festival, sponsored by the Alliance for Community Media. If your public access, educational access, government access, or local origination facility would like to participate as a Preliminary or Final Judging Site, please send a letter indicating your interest and describing your facility's capabilities to Randy VanDalsen, Hometown Video Festival, c/o The Buske Group, 2015 J Street, Suite 28, Sacramento, CA, 95814.

Each Preliminary Judging Site oversees the judging of about 60 - 70 entries. Each site determines four finalists in from one to four categories, depending on the number of videotapes entered in an assigned category. Five to seven judging panels will be required at each Preliminary Judging Site (again depending upon the number of videotapes entered in an assigned category), with each panel including three people: (1) an active community volunteer producer, (2) an access or local origination staff member, and (3) an expert in the category to be judged.

Preliminary Judging Sites must be able to view entries in either the VHS or 3/4" format. The preliminary judging activities must occur during the last half of April 1994. About 35 Preliminary Judging Sites will be selected.

The Alliance is also seeking letters of interest from facilities willing to host the Final Judging activities, where the award recipients are chosen in this annual event. Facilities which wish to be considered as



a host site for Final Judging should send a letter to the Hometown Video Festival Manager at the address listed previously. The Final Judging Site must have at least ten (10) viewing areas, to be set up for judging VHS or 3/4" entries, plus two other large areas to serve as a staging area and lunch/break room. These areas must be available for three consecutive days (Friday through Sunday or Saturday through Monday) to accommodate the judging of about 425 finalists. Approximately 75 people will be needed as judges (including staff members, community volunteer producers, and category experts), with about 20 of them coming in from outside the local metropolitan area. Final Judging will take place in mid-May 1994. Final Judging activities are overseen on-site by the Hometown Video Festival Manager. (NOTE: Priority consideration will be given to a facility from the Northeast Region of the Alliance, since 1983 was the last time that a site in this region hosted Final Judging.)

A nearly universal reaction of centers which have served as Hometown judging sites is that this activity generates great ideas for program topics and production techniques for their staff and community producers, and inspires them with a better perspective about local programming on cable systems throughout North America.

The deadline for letters of interest in participating as a preliminary or final judging site is December 1, 1993.



# CTR

## Back Issues Available

*A number of back issues of CTR remain available in varying quantities. For availability and ordering, contact the national office at 202/393-2650, or write the Alliance at 666 11th St. NW, Suite 806, Washington, DC 20001-4542.*

Members \$2 each, Non-members \$4 each, plus shipping and handling.

*Some issues no longer available. Be sure to confirm that the issues you want are still available.*

## WANTED! PRODUCERS FOR



**Volunteers are wanted to produce segments for this national award winning show.**

This video magazine features the stories and successes of people with developmental challenges such as mental retardation cerebral palsy and autism.

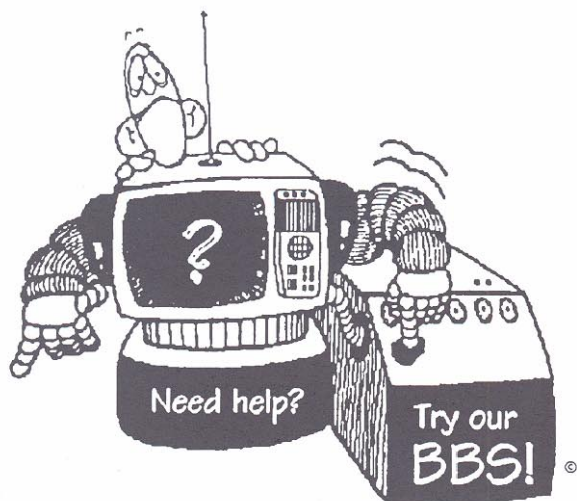
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